

**The Renaissance: Desire in Poetry and Drama from Shakespeare to Milton**

Code: 42302  
ECTS Credits: 6

Degree	Type	Year	Semester
4313157 Advanced English Studies	OT	0	0

## Contact

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## Use of languages

Principal working language: english (eng)

## Prerequisites

Apart from the general requirements for the MA admission, students taking this course should be interested in Renaissance literature. Basic notions will be introduced in the course so that students can engage in research in this area if they decide to do so.

## Objectives and Contextualisation

The course offers a detailed survey of the various representations of female desire in the English Renaissance, which is considered here not as an isolated cultural period, but in the context of the European Renaissance. We will approach the multiple configurations and transformations of female identity in this period in its relation to desire, understanding this latter term in the widest possible sense: both as biological/cultural compulsion and also as the impulse that allows the self to transcend its immediate context and transform it.

Our aim will be to show how in the work of Spenser, Shakespeare and Milton, as well as on that of the women writers of the period, female desire is presented as an object of unending fascination and fear: as an impulse that seems to call for constant regimentation and control, but which can also manage to outdo these constraints, and rewrite them creatively, thanks to its transformative force.

We will be discussing two texts in every one of the sessions: one set text belonging to the historical period we are examining, and a critical article which discusses and revises it in the light of our contemporary perspectives.

## Skills

- Analyse and synthesise information at an advanced level.
- Analyse the relationship between factors, processes or phenomena in the acquisition of English as a second language, its learning and teaching methods, and its literature, history and culture.
- Apply methodological knowledge of statistical analysis and data generation, treatment and codification of multilingual databases, analysis of literary texts, etc. to research.
- Communicate the knowledge acquired and the contributions of one's research correctly, accurately and clearly both orally and in writing.
- Critically argue, issue judgements and present ideas on the basis of the analysis of information originating from scientific production in these areas.
- Develop autonomous learning skills applicable to the research process.

- Distinguish and contrast between the different methodological and theoretical models applied to the academic study of the acquisition, teaching and use of English as a second language in multilingual and multicultural contexts, literary studies and cultural studies.
- Show respect towards the opinions, values, behaviours and/or practices of others.
- Use the English language for academic and professional purposes related to research into the acquisition, teaching and use of English as a second language in multilingual and multicultural contexts, literary studies and cultural studies.

## Learning outcomes

1. Analyse and interpret at an advanced level literary texts on desire in English Literary and specifically in the Theatre and Poetry of the 16th and 17th centuries
2. Analyse and interpret at an advanced level scientifically produced texts about desire in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth English Poetry and Plays, extracting relevant citations and making content summaries
3. Analyse and synthesise information at an advanced level.
4. Communicate the knowledge acquired and the contributions of ones research correctly, accurately and clearly both orally and in writing.
5. Develop autonomous learning skills applicable to the research process.
6. Distinguish and contrast the different theoretical and methodological models applied to the academic study of desire in English Poetry and Theatre of the 16th and 17th centuries..
7. Draft texts defending an idea in relation to a poetical or theatrical text in English from the 16th of 17th century, applying secondary sources to the critical argumentation.
8. Make oral presentation in English on subjects and texts related to advanced research of English Poetry and English Theatre of the 16th and 17th centuries.
9. Read, analyse and present the conclusions regarding texts that represent desire in Poetry and Theatre from Shakespeare to Milton.
10. Show respect towards the opinions, values, behaviours and/or practices of others.

## Content

### CONTENTS

Session 1: Introduction. Theoretical and Contextual Perspectives.

Session 2: Fashioning a (mythical) Gentlewoman (I).

→ Text: Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene* III (selection)

→ Article: Lauren Silberman, *Singing Unsung Heroines: Androgynous Discourse in Book II of the "Faerie Queene"*.

Session 3: Fashioning a (mythical) Gentlewoman (II).

→ Text: Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene* III (selection)

→ Article: Harry Berger Jr., *Resisting Translation: Britomart in Book III of the "Faerie Queene"*.

Session 4: Transformations of Desire on the Elizabethan Stage (I)

→ Text: William Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

→ Article: Catherine Belsey, *Disrupting Sexual Difference: Meaning and Genre in Shakespeare's Comedies*.

Session 5: Transformations of Desire on the Elizabethan Stage (II)

→ Text: William Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

→ Article: Valerie Traub, *Desire in Shakespeare and the Difference it Makes*.

Session 6: The Female Self, Before and After the Fall (I)

→ Text: John Milton, *Paradise Lost* IV and VIII

→ Article: James Grantham Turner, *The State of Eve: Female Ontogeny and the Politics of Marriage*.

Session 7: The Female Self, Before and After the Fall (II)

→ Text: John Milton, *Paradise Lost* IX

→ Article: Joseph Wittreich, *Milton's Transgressive Manoeuvres: Receptions and the Sexual Politics of "Paradise Lost"*.

Session 8: The Female Self, Before and After the Fall (III)

→ Text: John Milton, *Paradise Lost* IX

→ *Paradise Regained*

Session 9: Sappho and Sibyl in the Seventeenth Century (I).

→ Text: Katherine Philips, *Poems by Orinda* (1669)

→ Article: *Authorship, Friendship and Forms of Publication in Katherine Philips*, Hilary Menges, 2012.

Session 10: Sappho and Sibyl in the Seventeenth Century (II).

→ Text: Anne Finch, *Miscellany Poems*, 1713.

→ Article: *Critics and Criticism in the Poetry of Anne Finch*, Michael Gavin, 2011.

Session 11: Forms of Sublimation: The Prophetic Voice (I)

→ Anna Trapnel, *Report and Plea* (1654)

→ Article: *Sectarian Spaces: The Politics of Place and Gender in Seventeen-Century Prophetic Writing*, Hilary Hinds, 2004.

Session 12: Forms of Sublimation: The Zest for Knowledge (II)

→ Margaret Cavendish, *The Motion of Thoughts*, from *Poems and Fancies* (1653)

→ Article: *Margaret Cavendish's Mythopoetics*, Sandro Jung, 2011.

Session 13: The Economic Imperative: Writing after the Restoration

→ Aphra Behn, *Selected Writings* (1670-1680)

→ Article: *The Market, the Public and the Female Author*, Angela Keane.

Session 14: Summary, Conclusions and Final Perspectives.

## Methodology

See the table below

## Activities

Title	Hours	ECTS	Learning outcomes
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**Type: Directed**

Debates and discussion in class	50	2	1, 2, 5, 6, 9
Reading and Research	50	2	1, 2, 3, 5, 9
Tutorials	25	1	3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9

**Evaluation**

See the table below

**Evaluation activities**

Title	Weighting	Hours	ECTS	Learning outcomes
Clas participation	20%	5	0.2	1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 10
Final paper	40%	10	0.4	1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7
Periodic exercises	40%	10	0.4	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 9

**Bibliography****Bibliografia Bàsica:**

Clemen, Wolfgang, *The Development of Shakespeare's Imagery*, Methuen, 1977.

De Grazia, Margreta and Wells, Stanley (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare*, CUP, 2001.

Frye, Northrop, *Northrop Frye on Shakespeare*, Yale University Press, 1986.

Greenblatt, Stephen. *The Swerve, How the Renaissance Began*. London: Vintage Books, 2012.

Gray, Catharine. *Women Writers and Public Debate in Seventeenth-Century Britain*. New York: Palgrave, 2007.

Kermode, Frank, *Shakespeare's Language*, Penguin Books, 2000.

Kott, Jan, *Shakespeare Our Contemporary*, Methuen, 1964.

Levi, Anthony. *Renaissance and Reformation: Intellectual Genesis*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002.

MacCulloch, Diarmaid. *Reformation: Europe's House Divided*. London: Penguin Books, 2003.

Matchinske, Megan. *Writing, Gender and State in Early Modern England: Identity Formation and the Female Subject*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

McEvoy, Sean. *Shakespeare: The Basics*. London: Routledge, 2000.

Milton, John (Scott Elledge ed.) ***Paradise lost: an authoritative text backgrounds and sources criticism***. **New York: Norton, 1993.**

Norbrook, David. *The Penguin Book of Renaissance Verse*. London: Penguin, 2005.

Novy, Marianne. *Shakespeare and Outsiders*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Nuttal, A.D., *Shakespeare the Thinker*, Yale UP, 2007.

Orgel, Stephen, "Prospero's Wife", in *The Tempest: Contemporary Critical Essays*, ed. by R.S. White, New Casebook Series, Macmillan, 1999.

Patterson, Annabel. *John Milton*. London: Longman, 1991.

Van Doren, Mark: *Shakespeare*. New York: New York Review of Books, 2005.

Zwicker, Steven N. *The Cambridge Companion to English Literature 1650:1740*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

**Recursos digitals:**

The Shakespeare Resource Centre, <http://www.bardweb.net/>

Society for the Study of Early Modern Women: <http://ssemw.org/>

Center for Renaissance and Baroque Studies: <http://www.crbs.umd.edu/index.shtml>